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SCHAKOWSKY HAILS PASSAGE OF BILL TO COMBAT INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN INTO SEX TRADE AND SLAVERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today hailed the passage of legislation to combat the international trafficking of women and children into the sex trade and slavery. It is estimated that over 50,000 women and children are brought to the United States under false pretenses each year and forced to work as prostitutes, abused laborers, or servants. Each year, one to two million women and children are trafficked around the world.

"This is by far one of the worst human rights violations of our time. Women and children are easy targets for exploitation. I am committed to putting an end to trafficking and to advancing the economic, legal, and political status of women and children here in the U.S. and worldwide," Schakowsky said.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (H.R. 3244) would give the President broad authority to limit foreign aid to countries that fail to curb trafficking and to meet minimum standards. The bill would also require the creation of an interagency task force to combat and monitor trafficking. In addition, H.R. 3244 directs the federal government to work with other nations to enhance economic opportunities for potential victims and to increase public awareness. Furthermore, the bill would provide benefits to victims of severe forms of trafficking in the United States.

"In Bangladesh, I met Nurjahan. She thinks she is about 15 years old. She knows for sure that at age 8 she was bought by a brothel in Pakistan, probably for between \$200 and \$1500. She finally escaped from a life as a sex slave," Schakowsky said.

"Nurjahan and so many others are waiting for us to take seriously the horrendous practices involved in the trafficking of human beings. H.R. 3244 is that serious step," she added.